

E 525

.5

26th

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00019965120



Hollinger  
pH 8.5  
Mill Run F3-1957

E. 525

.5

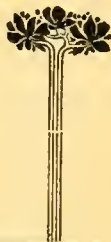
26th

Copy 1

# *A Historic Sketch*

*Lest We Forget*

*Company "E" 26th Ohio  
Infantry*



*In the War for the Union  
1861-65*



*By Captain Welden Kelly*



# *A Historic Sketch*

*Lest We Forget*

*Company "E" 26th Ohio  
Infantry*



*In the War for the Union  
1861-65*



*By Captain Welden Kelly*

2522

25



*Lest We Forget the Men  
of Company "E"*



# A Historical Sketch of Co. E, 26th Ohio

## Volunteer Infantry

About the fifth day of June, 1861, Sylvester M. Hewitt, assisted by several others, began the enlistment and organization of a company of volunteer infantry at Mt. Gilead, Morrow county, Ohio, under the first call of the President for three-year troops. Rapid progress was made and in a few days the good ladies of the community organized and prepared woolen underwear for the men. June 14th, 1861, the company, about 80\* in number, formed on the North Public Square and marched to Gilead Station (now Edison), followed by nearly the entire people of the community. We boarded the train for Columbus and marched thence four miles west to the newly established Camp Chase, where the 23rd, 24th and 25th Ohio Infantry were being organized, and their quarters partially built. We were quartered in tents, and on the following day heavy details were made to commence building quarters for the 26th Ohio Infantry, the regiment to which our company

---

\*While at Camp Chase the company was filled to the maximum (101)

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

was assigned. Here our military education and discipline began and was continued unceasingly under the wise direction of our Colonel E. P. Fyffe, a West Point graduate, and his able assistants, until its adhesiveness, confidence and valor made it a fighting machine so perfect that no censure or taint mars its history, but several general orders and many personal compliments mark its career. To this regiment we became company E. The first commissioned officers of this company were elected after our arrival at Camp Chase, and were Captain Sylvester M. Hewitt, First Lieutenant Henry C. Brumback and Second Lieutenant James E. Godman. Captain Hewitt was promoted to Major and transferred to the 32nd Ohio Infantry, and James K. Ewart was commissioned Captain of company E, July 29th, 1861, the same date that we left Camp Chase for Virginia. The Quartermaster's department was unable to furnish regulation uniforms as fast as the new troops organized, hence our first uniforms consisted of gray pants and roundabouts. This caused great annoyance during the first two or three months of our service in Virginia by our troops mistaking us for the enemy and firing upon us. General J. D. Cox ordered that we be kept on inside duty until properly uniformed. We arrived at the front at Gawley Bridge, Virginia, August 11th, 1861. After our gray uniform experience we were continually in front in all the campaigns of the army in which we served. We remained in Virginia until February 1st, 1862, and participated in the campaigns to Boon Court House, Sewal Mountain, Cotton Mountain, and Fayetteville and were engaged with the enemy at Horseshoe Bend, Sewal

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

Mountain and New River. The casualty of battle, however, was one. Corporal John McCausland, by concussion of a bursting shell, was seriously injured at Horseshoe Bend. Our loss from all causes was three deaths from disease and ten discharged because of disability. The company had seven deserters during its entire service, but as none of them were of value to the company or government, we drop them at this early stage. Some of them, however, were carried on the roll to a later date. One only of this number enlisted from Morrow county. The regiment was transferred to Louisville—

“Way down in old Kentucky,

Where they never have the blues,

Where the Captains shoot the Colonels,

And the Colonels shoot the Booze”—

And marched to Bardstown where the regiment became part of the 15th brigade, commanded by General Milo Haskel; 6th division, commanded by General Thos. J. Wood; army of the Ohio, commanded by General Don Carlos Buell. In this brigade\* the 26th regiment remained during the entire war. the other three regiments forming the brigade leaving us at different periods—the 17th Indiana to Wilders Mounted Infantry, the 58th Indiana became the pontooniers of the army of the Cumberland, and the 3rd Kentucky was transferred to General Harker's brigade, remaining in the same division. In February, 1862, the division moved on Bowling Green, thence to

\*In the reorganizations of the army it changed to different divisions and corps and its number changed to correspond, regiments left and also other regiments joined, but at no time was the brigade organization broken up.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

Nashville, Tenn., and from there was the 4th division in line of march, under Buell, to Pittsburg Landing, arriving on the field of battle as the enemy was leaving. Our wagons were left some miles in the rear, on the opposite side of the Tennessee River, and did not reach us for about ten days. We carried our rations from the Hamburg Landing to camp—a distance of nearly four miles. In the slow approach of our army on Corinth, Miss., we were several times quite heavily engaged, skirmishing with the enemy, losing a few men from the regiment, but company E suffered no losses. On the evacuation by the Confederate forces we were moved eastward along the line of the Memphis & Charleston railroad, crossing to the north side of the Tennessee River at Decatur, Alabama, about July 6th, 1862, thence through Huntsville northeast into Tennessee via Fayetteville, Winchester, Deckard and Hillsboro to McMinnville, on August 30th, 1862, by a very rapid march of eight miles. Terminating by a double quick, we succeeded in striking Forest's cavalry, driving them so rapidly that we captured their ambulance, with medical supplies, and also one of the General's horses. For rapidity of march and promptness in action the regiment was complimented in general orders by the division commander. September 2nd we started from McMinnville via Murfreesboro, Nashville, Bowling Green and Mumfordsville, for Louisville, Ky., to intercept Bragg, who had invaded Kentucky through East Tennessee and was threatening Cincinnati and Louisville. We were the advance division under Buell, skirmished heavily with the enemy at Mumfordsville, reaching the Ohio River 20 miles below Louis-

ville at dark, and, continuing the march during the night, reached Louisville, Ky., at 3 a. m., September 23rd, 1862. October 1st the army moved from Louisville, via Bardstown to Perryville, where, on October 8th, the battle of Perryville was fought. We were on the right in battle line under General George H. Thomas and skirmished lightly with the enemy, expecting orders, which never came, to attack. We listened to the roar of the battle to our left and were not heavily engaged; we followed the retreating enemy through Danville, skirmished heavily with them at Stanford and followed on southeast through Crab Orchard to about 30 miles beyond Mt. Vernon, when we were ordered back through Crab Orchard, via Columbus, Ky., and Gallatin, Tenn., to Nashville. While at Nashville we were engaged in three skirmishes while scouting and guarding foraging trains. On Christmas day one of them occurred. We made a very long and hard march, returning to camp near midnight with wagon trains loaded with grain and other forage and found orders waiting us to have three days' rations in haversacks, strike camp and march at daylight the following morning, December 26th, 1862. This was the opening of the Stone River or Murfreesboro campaign. Our division was the second in line of march. Skirmishing in front soon began, Palmer's division gradually driving the enemy's cavalry. It began raining about 9 a. m. Near night the enemy became more obstinate, using artillery freely, and held the village of Lavergn, fifteen miles south of Nashville. Our division moved to the front and went into bivouac. The rain continued during the night.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

In the reorganization of the army under General Rosecrans we were in the First brigade, First division, Left wing, Army of the Cumberland. The Left wing had the direct line of march to Murfreesboro. The center under Thomas and right wing under McCook were several miles to our right and had a greater distance to move, hence we were held until 10 a. m. next morning before moving. Wood's division took the advance and our brigade deployed. The enemy, from an elevated position and under cover of buildings, firmly resisted our advance, and we were compelled to charge the place, losing 32 men from the brigade. Our regiment, making the direct attack, lost 28 of that number. By rapidly driving the enemy a distance of seven miles, we saved the bridge at Stewart's Creek and captured 50 or 60 prisoners. The weather became extremely cold. The next day, Sunday, the 28th, we remained in position, and Monday, the 29th, moved forward, our division on the left, Palmer's on the right of the pike, driving the enemy to their fortified line at Stone River. We remained in line of battle on the 30th, while Thomas and McCook closed up on our right and formed a continuous line. We received orders that night to cross the river, which the left of our division joined, and attack the enemy on the following morning. While executing this order the roar of the battle reached us from the extreme right of the army and our movements were by orders changed and we recrossed the river. General Bragg, during the day and night of the 30th, had moved the bulk of his army so that it reached far past our extreme right, and early commenced doubling our lines back from that flank; our

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

regiment was placed in the line of battle to the right of Hazen's brigade, this being the point where the retrograde movement in our line ceased. This position, on an open plain, without protection, we held for several hours, repulsing three separate and distinct charges, exhausting our 60 rounds and being repeatedly supplied by details sent from company. Thus for hours we held the key position of the battle, until a new line was established at nearly right angles with us. We spent the last night of 1862 on the battle front until near morning. In the reestablishment of the line we were placed in the reserve and remained there during January 1, 1863. On the morning of January 2nd we occupied a position, the left of the regiment joining the Nashville and Murfreesboro pike, in an artillery duel fought by several batteries and an equal number of the enemy. In the forenoon we were in the direct line of shot and had several casualties in the regiment. This was the last day of heavy fighting, Bragg retreating on the night of the 3rd. Company E still retained its good luck, losing its commanding officer\* killed and six wounded, out of a total loss from the regiment of 102 during the campaign.

The company, during the year 1862, from deaths, discharges and resignations, lost in all 27 men, leaving on the roll of the company 63. We remained camped at Murfreesboro until June 24th, drilling daily from 4 to 6 hours, when not on other duty. We were on several foraging and scouting ex-

---

\*1st Lieut. David McClellan of company G, was killed while in temporary command of company E. No officer belonging to the company being present.



peditions during the time. By the President's orders the army under General Rosecrans was named the Army of the Cumberland and the parts that had formerly been known as center, right and left wing, were changed to the 14th, 20th and 21st army corps, remaining under the Commanders Thomas, McCook and Crittenden. The brigade and division numbers were changed to conform to the corps organization. The 26th Ohio was part of the First brigade, First division, 21st army corps.

In the Tullahoma campaign we failed in coming into direct contact with the enemy, Bragg retreating before we reached his lines, and our division was stationed at Pelham and Hillsboro, at the west slope of the Cumberland Mountains, until August 16th, 1863, when the advance over the mountains commenced. We reached the Sequatchie Valley at Thurman, marched down the valley and crossed the Tennessee River on flat boats at Shell Mound and held the advance on the direct line south of the Tennessee River to Chattanooga. The 26th Ohio was the advance regiment marching in column and company E the advance guard, and came around the point of Lookout Mountain in a skirmish line, extending far up the slope to near the upper palisade. After we came in sight of the city—or town, as it was at that time—and demonstrated that the enemy was gone, a regiment of mounted infantry passed us. We, however, took possession and did the patrol duty, gathering in many prisoners during the afternoon and night of September 9th. On the following day we followed up the line of retreat of Bragg's army, passing



HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

through Roseville Gap in Missionary Ridge, thence on the Lafayette Road to Lee and Gordon's Mills at a ford of the Chickamauga River, where we remained until September 19th, skirmishing daily. For the purpose of demonstrating the severity of loss and that the reader may more fully comprehend them, I will here, after its two-year-and-three-month service, all of it in actual war, most of it in very hard campaigning, show its strength: January 1st, 1863 (previously stated 63 enrolled), increase by promotion and transfer, three;\* making 66; discharged in 1863, previous to September 19th, 11 men; there were on detached service at division headquarters 2; at Columbus, Ohio, one; musicians 3; to the 8th Indiana Battery 2, to Pioneer Battalion 3, teamsters 3, absent temporarily 1, absent sick 8, present with the company 32. Company E went into the battle of Chickamauga with 2 officers and 30 enlisted men. We plainly heard the roar of battle nearly four miles to our left, down the stream from us, or to the north (the Chickamauga flows north and we were on the west bank of the stream, fronting to the east), early in the forenoon, Saturday, September 19th. This continued growing nearer until about 3 p. m., when we were ordered double quick to the left following the Chattanooga & Lafayette road in the direction of the heavy fighting, for near two miles or to the Vineyard farm. The regiment formed line of battle in the ordinary way of that date, two ranks touching elbows, in the timber facing east about 60 feet east of the road and parallel to it. We had

---

\*Our captain, 1st and 2nd Lieutenants had each been promoted from other companies of the regiment and transferred to company E.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

no supporting line and were the extreme left of the brigade. In our rear across the road and parallel to it was a cleared field about 600 feet wide gently sloping from each side to a draw or ravine near its center. The place was strange to us. A line of our men was supposed to be in our front and extending to our left. The underbrush of and under the timber prevented us from seeing more than a short distance. We were ordered to fix bayonets and lie down. We formed the opinion that we were to make a charge. Colonel William H. Young in command of the regiment, says in his official report of the battle that we numbered about 350. Colonel W. H. Fox, the great statistician, in his book, "Fighting Regiments," says the number was 362, but in a letter to the writer Colonel Fox says his figures must have been taken from the morning report. In his letter he gives company E 33 men, undoubtedly including the one absent guarding beef cattle, who would still be carried on the morning report. Three hundred and fifty men, the peer of any equal number in any one body that the United States had ever produced, with two and one quarter years' experience, all of it war, inured to hardship and danger, never having been repulsed or driven, thoroughly drilled and disciplined, well officered, a perfect fighting machine! We heard the tramp of moving troops in our front, supposing it to be our own men, but the enemy in full charge appeared in our immediate front and secured the advantage of the first volley. Quickly we responded with a rattling fire, not waiting for orders. Load and fire at will was the impulse and action of all. Commands could not be heard. The enemy's line was

fairly repulsed and their second line had come to their assistance. We were holding our own and gradually gaining, with full confidence that we were whipping or gaining the fight. During this period of time our division and brigade commanders were sending orders for us to fall back—our left flank was being turned—but orders were slow in reaching us. Horses could not live to carry them on that bloody field, our regimental field officers were quickly dismounted and in the hurry of that musketry the word had to be passed along the line that our flank was exposed and we must retreat across the field. Gradually that line moved back to the road where all could see the line of gray already swinging across the open to our left. A hasty retreat was made to the fence on the opposite or west side of the field, where, with a promptness under fire never excelled, the regiment rallied and again opened on the enemy, which lasted but a few minutes, when reinforcements (a brigade from Sheridan's division), came rushing to our left. We recrossed the field, driving the enemy beyond our first position in the timber on the east side of the road, for hours without protection of any kind, at very close range. We had contended for the position of that road, and as the sun closed its gaze by passing behind the western hills we were masters of the situation. Over half of the company had fallen in two or three hours, desperate fighting, not as Greek meets Greek but as Americans meet Americans. Go view the fields, ye good people of Morrow County! Stand by that monument erected by the great State of Ohio to the memory of the 26th, 212 of whom fell in that bloody battle, three-fourths of them un-

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

doubtedly on the Vineyard Farm, and then, but a few yards away, see the one erected by the State of Georgia in memory of the 20th regiment infantry, C. S. A., from that state, and read their inscription ("This regiment went into battle with 23 officers; of this number 17 were killed and wounded"), and then read Vanhorn's description. In speaking of that part of the battlefield (the Vineyard Farm) he says: "Mapped upon field and forest in glaring insolation by the bodies of the slain." Chaplain Thomas B. Vanhorn was General Thomas' chosen historian. He superintended the moving of the bodies of the slain from Chickamauga to the National Cemetery at Chattanooga. As daylight faded and darkness began we closed our lines to the right, sent one guard from each company fifty paces to the front and supplied ourselves with a double quantity of cartridges. One cavalryman came to each company, secured their canteens, went to Crawfish Springs, over a mile away, and returned them to us filled with much-needed water. Thus the good Samaritan act was performed by them.

Soon a temporary truce was formed, details made, and Johnnie and Yank were soon mingled together, caring for the wounded as best they could. At about 2 or 3 a. m., Sunday morning, orders were quietly whispered along the line to prepare to move, and very soon the line silently moved to the left a distance of nearly two miles and was halted on the east slope of Missionary Ridge, nearly a mile north of the Widow Glenn house, and we were informed that we were to be the reserve. This position we held until 9 or 9:30 a. m., when we were moved to the front line, Wood's division relieving that

of General Negley. The 26th Ohio was about one-fourth mile southwest of the Brotherton house, it being the extreme right of the division. The losses of the previous day had shortened the division line until we failed in filling the space vacated by Negley, and in order to do so extended to the right to reach the left of McCook, until our line became attenuated. We heard the roar of the battle to our left gradually coming nearer; we were heavily skirmishing with the enemy while in this condition about 11 a. m. when General Wood received written orders from General Rosecrans "to close up on Reynolds and support him." A division line of battle, as we formed at that time, was half a mile or more. Reynolds commanded the 2nd division at our left, Brannon's intervening. Hence Wood, when he executed the order, moved in rear of and parallel to Brannon, we being the extreme right of Wood, by moving in column to the left, the 8th Indiana Battery in our immediate front. When we had marched nearly half a division length, the battery, in its difficulties, having no road in the timber, much of it heavy underbrush with bad ravines to cross, delayed the two regiments in the rear, while the head of the column was hastening to the support of Reynolds. This had left us far in the rear. In this condition we received the enemy's charge. Naturally and rightly, all that could followed the head of column as per orders. We of the 26th Ohio and 13th Michigan, in the extreme rear, were compelled to stop and repulse the charge, thereby becoming isolated from all our commands and in the center of that one-half-mile gap that was created by a mistaken order and resulted in dividing the army.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

As soon as the battery extricated itself from its difficulties, Colonel Young, our regimental commander, ordered us to fall back. It was useless sacrifice to do otherwise. We were halted several times at favorable localities to check the enemy, and that gallant band of heroes, if you please, held its organization under as trying circumstances as war produces, its last stand being made upon the side of a spur of Missionary Ridge, where a tablet now stands to mark its heroism. Here we held position for nearly an hour, aided by the 8th Indiana and 6th Ohio Batteries. To our left the right of Brannon's division was flanked and to protect itself swung back to the north. To our right the left of Davis' division was flanked and to protect itself swung back to the south, thus widening the gap and leaving us that much farther from support on either side, the enemy advancing, taking protection of timber to the south and also to the north of us, gaining our flanks, and we were compelled to abandon our position. Here the 8th Indiana Battery by its loss of horses was compelled to abandon their pieces. We retreated to the dry valley road and thence with Sheridan and Davis to Roseville. Our part in the battle of Chickamauga was over.

Colonel Fox, under the head of "maximum percentage of casualties in a single engagement under circumstances showing that few if any of the missing were captured men," places the 26th Ohio thirty-fifth in the list of over two thousand regiments that were in the service during the war of the rebellion, and, basing his estimates on 362 engaged and the total loss 212, as previously stated, at 58.5 per cent. Basing the estimates



HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

on Colonel Young's report of 350 engaged, total loss 213, gives us a small fraction of over 60 per cent. Of this, company E lost 20, or even 62.5 per cent, 12 of whom were killed or mortally wounded—37.5 per cent. The killed and mortally wounded were: First Lieutenant Francis M. Williams, First Sergeant William H. Green, Sergeant Silas Stucky, Corporal Luther Reed, and Privates Moses Aller, William Calvert, John Blaine, James R. Goodman, Charles A. R. Kline, Samuel Neiswander, Emanuel W. Stahler and Robert W. Stonestreet. The wounded were: Corporal James W. Clifton, Privates William H. H. Geyer, Henry C. Latham, McDonald Lottridge, Joseph L. Rue, Henry Stovenour, Adelphus E. Stewart and Isaiah Sipes.

Others in the company were painfully wounded, but are not included in the list, as they remained and continued doing duty. Only one, William H. H. Geyer, recovered sufficiently during the remainder of his enlistment to rejoin the company for duty. Of the killed, by examining the "Roster of Ohio Soldiers" (published by the State of Ohio), you will find four, viz.: Silas Stucky, Moses Aller, John Blaine and Emanuel W. Stahler, reported missing. This is misleading. Kindly remember that the temporary truce was formed that night soon after the heavy fighting ceased and we closed our thinned column to right. We were nearly a quarter of a mile south of where our terrible losses had occurred and but few men were permitted to leave the line. Our band boys, who usually cared for the wounded, had lost, killed and wounded, nine of their number. They were largely Sheridan's men, strang-

ers to us, who gathered up our wounded, placed them in ambulances and sent them to the Crawfish Spring field hospital, which fell into the enemies hands the following day, and we saw that part of the Vineyard Farm no more for several months. McDonald Lottridge, who on account of wounds never rejoined his company, saw Moses Aller fall and was satisfied from his actions that he was shot in the head. Joseph Williams of Company K, (a brother of Lieutenant Francis Williams of our company), while lying wounded in a fence corner by the side of John Blaine, adjusted a knapsack under Blaine's head, and says he: "Blaine was shot through the breast," and could have lived but a short time. Members of the regimental band, whose duty it was to gather up the wounded, claim to have seen the bodies of Silas Stucky and Emanuel W. Stahler dead upon the field. These four men of the company are reported to be missing in the "Roster of Ohio Soldiers." Neither of them has been heard of since the battle, hence there can be no doubt that they were numbered with the slain. In 1861, while in Virginia, a man of the regiment returned from a hospital at Charleston and reported that James D. Dickerson of company E had died. The officers dropped his name from the records. He (Dickerson) soon after reported for duty and his name was replaced on the records. This incident aids in explaining why their names appear among the missing. A large per cent of the Union dead remained unburied until we came in possession of the battlefield after the battle of Chattanooga or until about December 1st. Two brigades of our army were sent to the fields



HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

for that purpose. The following day, September 1st, we were in the regular line of battle on Missionary Ridge, north of Roseville Gap, and offered battle to the enemy. During the night we formed a line of battle closer to Chattanooga, the flanks touching the Tennessee River, above and below. Our position was at Fort Wood, which we aided in building, due east of the town.

In the reorganization of the army, the 20th and 21st army corps were practically consolidated and formed the 4th corps. In this organization we became part of the 2nd brigade, commanded by General Geo. D. Wagner, 2nd division commanded by Major General P. H. Sheridan. Our regiment was taken out of the line of battle and camped in the town and heavy details made from it to guard the supply trains to Bridgeport, Ala., and return. It was our understanding at the time that we were to be detached from the brigade and become a part of the local garrison. We having been the first to occupy and patrol the place, we felt that it was due us, and having been so fearfully mangled at Chickamauga it would give time to partially recuperate, but Sheridan objected, stating that such regiments, full of experience, could not be spared from the front, and we were soon doing picket duty. No supplies could be furnished by the country to which we had access. The road traveled to bring them was a mountainous one and sixty miles to railroad. The mules were shortly fed and heavily worked. The rainy season opened and our rations grew less and less until a half ration was issued to the men. Bacon was not issued, but fresh beef was used in its

place. The cattle were driven from the Ohio river, a distance of near 400 miles, and grazing in the mountainous country was not well calculated to produce fat. Hence we got the expression, which originated at Chattanooga during the siege, "beef dried on the hoof." This was the situation when General Thomas telegraphed Grant: "We can hold the place till we starve." Over ten thousand horses and mules died during the siege and those that survived were in no condition for service.

October 27th, by a brilliant movement, Thomas at Chattanooga and Hooker at Bridgeport Co-operating, we gained possession of the river from Browns Ferry west, giving us water transportation to within nine or ten miles, and in a few days the soldiers were on full rations. The horses and mules did not fare so well. Bragg's army largely outnumbered that of General Thomas, for, be it understood, his (Bragg's) army of the Tennessee had, before the battle of Chickamagua, been reinforced by Buckner's army of East Tennessee. Two divisions of Joe Johnson's army of Mississippi and Longstreet's entire corps from Lee's army of Virginia and also a large per cent of the parolled prisoners from Vicksburg had joined him. Hooker, with 15,000 from the Potomac army, had partially joined us and we were expecting Sherman with 20,000 to arrive soon. Activity with us commenced, indicating an offensive movement. We had been under the fire of the enemy's guns since September 19th. Sherman was delayed by heavy rains and high waters. Under Grant's instructions Thomas ordered the two divisions of the

4th corps, Sheridan and Wood, to advance and drive the enemy from their outer line and capture Orchard Knob. This movement was made about 3 p. m. November 23d, and was the opening of the battle of Chattanooga. Our losses were nearly two hundred, mostly from Wood's division, none from company E. We occupied our new position three-eighths of a mile south of Orchard Knob, one mile west and in plain view of the enemy's line of works at top and foot of Missionary Ridge, and were under the fire of their field and siege artillery during the 24th, listening to and watching Hooker's fight above the clouds on Lookout Mountain, and remained in this position on the 25th, watching Sherman's battle at the north end of Missionary Ridge until 3 p. m. or perhaps later. Between our position and the ridge was a plain, partly open and part timber, most of the timber having been recently cut by the Confederates. All the fences were gone. Missionary Ridge lies nearly north and south and extends from the Tennessee River at the north many miles south. Its average elevation is 600 feet above the plain and the distance from base to summit near one-fourth of a mile. About 2 p. m. each man was notified that when six shots were fired in regular succession from the artillery on Orchard Knob we were to move forward in order, keeping well our alignment, and take the Confederate works at the foot of the ridge. A tiresome wait of one or two hours followed. The men's faces became pale, but firm pressure of the lips showed the determination. The time passed slowly, for the mental strain was great. Finally, the signal came, carefully counted by each, and when the sixth

sounded all stepped over our temporary works and moved forward.

The enemy's artillery promptly opened in full force from the top of the ridge, the shells exploding all around us. A file or two of men fell near the colors. The men began quickening the step—no pale faces now—the excitement of battle was on. You could constantly hear the officers' command—"Steady men! Go slow!" Time flew by like a dream. The enemy's line in the lower works at the foot of the ridge became demoralized and they left before we reached them. The reverse side of their works offered us no protection from the artillery and infantry fire from the top, and by a common impulse, without orders, we continued the charge up the side of the ridge. We had the usual double line formation, the 26th Ohio in the front line, the 15th Indiana supporting 150 to 200 paces in the rear. We were to a great extent winded, having made the last three or four hundred yards double quick. We moved up the hills slowly, loading and firing, taking advantage of such protection as was available. The enemy was at this time largely overshooting us and the 15th Indiana, in our rear, was suffering heavily. When half or two-thirds the way up the ridge they came forward to our assistance where they could take part in the shooting. Lieutenant Wm. B. Johnson of company E went down with a shattered leg and ordered his First Sergeant to go on with the company, but to see that he was cared for that night. We reached the enemy's works and captured them, taking a few prisoners, most of the enemy escaping down the eastern slope of the ridge, which

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

was not so precipitous as the western which we had come up. The road leading from General Bragg's headquarters, (about three hundred yards south of where our regiment reached the top), going east down the slope, was the only way available for the Confederates' artillery to make their escape. General Sheridan, quick to seize and hold the advantage, came to the left of his division and ordered Colonel Young, with his 26th Ohio and the 15th Indiana, to hasten northeast down the slope and capture all we could reach or head from the road mentioned. This we did for nearly a mile, gaining two brass guns at one place, four brass and two Parrott guns, several caissons and limbers at another. The troops of Wood's division to our left advanced but a short distance after reaching the top of the ridge and were recalled. A quarter of a mile or more of gap now existed between our right and the brigade, which was advancing in line along the road mentioned and became heavily engaged. Sheridan sent orders for us to oblique to the right. It was now dark and under Colonel Young's directions we moved carefully and slowly over ravines, through brush, guided by the sound of battle, striking the enemy's line on an abrupt knob, which we, without hesitation or any delay, charged, and captured two more pieces of artillery and many wagons. General Sheridan, in his official report of the battle, in speaking of this part of the engagement states: "But a few moments elapsed ere the 26th Ohio and 15th Indiana carried the crest. When the head of the column reached the summit of the hill the moon rose from behind and a medallion view of the column was

disclosed as it crossed the moon's disk and attacked the enemy."

Our part in the battle was over. That the reader may more fully understand the important part taken by us I will give a few statistics taken from official records: Loss of Sheridan's 2nd division 4th army corps, 1346, the heaviest in any division of the army. Wood's 3rd division, 4th army corps, came second, with 1035. Our 2nd brigade, 2nd division, 4th army corps, lost 730. There were three brigades in each division. The next brigade to ours in loss was General Hazen's 2nd Brigade, 3rd (Wood's) division, 4th army corps, 522. That magnificent 15th Indiana regiment that was in the second line supporting us, that came so gallantly to our aid and so nobly stayed with us (see official report), went into the battle with 334 officers and men, and of this number its loss was 199 killed and wounded, the heaviest regimental loss in the battle. The three regiments sustaining the greatest loss were all in our brigade. The 26th Ohio numbered present about 150 and lost 36. Company E, 13 engaged, loss 5. All of them had participated with the company at Chickamauga. Thus of the 32 engaged on September 19, seven were left, two of whom were later killed in battle while with the company. James H. Smith was shot, a minnie (1 oz.) ball passing through his leg while we were going up the ridge. He examined the wound and remained with the company, the blood spurting from the top of his shoes at each step until he was ordered to the hospital by Colonel Young after the battle was over. No organization in the battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga



carried their banner higher on the roll of fame than did the 26th Ohio.

The following day, November 26, the two divisions, Sheridan's and Wood's, of the 4th corps, were ordered to march to relieve General Burnside, besieged at Knoxville. We were expected to live largely from the products of the country (now largely exhausted). We had drawn no clothing since leaving Murfreesboro in June. Our mules and horses were either dead or unfit for service. We were short on clothing and transportation. We left our camp in Chattanooga and saw it no more until January 18, 1864. This was a memorable and a cold winter, with its historic cold New Year's day. We marched through the day and part of the time gathered corn, shelled it and ran the water mills, of which that country was plentifully supplied. During the night, when we could, we built log-heap fires, and when the ground had become thoroughly warm, we divided the fire, cleaned away the coals and ashes and slept on the warm ground between the two fires. January 1st, while at Blains Crossroads, northeast of Knoxville, the regiment veteranized or re-enlisted and was ordered home on thirty days' furlough. We marched to Chattanooga, arriving on the 18th, completed our papers and were mustered January 21, starting home by freight soon afterward.

We left Columbus, Ohio, on our return to the front, about March 4th, joining our brigade at Charleston, Tennessee, about March 15th. In April we moved to Cleveland, Tennessee, and from there started on the Atlanta campaign, May 3rd, and came under the fire of the enemy's guns May

7th, and remained in hearing of their guns and under fire until September 5th—at least over one hundred days under fire. We (our brigade) advanced along the Eastern slope and near the summit of Rocky Face Ridge, supporting Harken's brigade, moving along the summit, assaulting the main line of works. We came under the direct fire from their main line, but were restrained from assaulting. We held this position until Sherman's entire army (except part of the cavalry and our 4th corps), had moved south along the west base of the ridge to Snake Creek Gap and through it to near Resaca, when Johnson abandoned his fortified position at Rocky Face and hastily retreated, we following on the direct line of his retreat and on arrival joining at once in the battle of Resaca, driving the enemy's lines into their fortifications. We built a temporary line of works within 200 yards of theirs, holding this position until they again retreated. The night of May 15, bridges were floated and the Oostanaula River crossed, the 4th corps taking the advance, driving Johnston's rear guard. On the 17th, our division (Newton now commanding, Sheridan having been ordered to the Eastern department) was in the advance. One brigade deployed. In the evening two brigades were deployed and the enemy's lines driven until a line of works was developed. Artillery was freely used, the 26th Ohio losing over twenty men. Darkness closed the fighting and in the morning their works were abandoned, we following, bivouacking the night of the 18th near Kingston, Ga. The 19th we advanced on Cassville, the enemy stubbornly resisting, and in the evening a general line of battle was



formed. They were again fortified and as before, during the night, abandoned them and crossed the Etowah River. Here we were delayed until the railroad bridges could be rebuilt and supplies reach us. May 23rd we crossed the river, keeping to the west of the Altoona Mountains in the direction of Dallas, the 20th corps under Hooker having the advance on the road to New Hope Church, where several roads formed a junction. In the effort to reach this point Hooker became heavily engaged and we, the nearest division of the corps and army, were rushed to his aid, and just as twilight faded into darkness, in the midst of a very heavy rain, thunder and lightning storm and the roar of artillery and crash of musketry, we closed upon Hooker's left within 300 yards of the enemy's main line of works. Here we fortified and remained under their fire and responded to it until June 6th. Johnston having retreated, we moved to near Ackworth, on the railroad, south of Altoona. Here we rested until the 10th. We moved forward southeast, heavily skirmishing almost continuously, the artillery firing constantly, to Pine Mountain, Lost Mountain, Muddy Creek and Kenesaw, each of these being thoroughly fortified. We reached the west slope of the latter June 20th, and on the 22nd drove the enemy's skirmishers into their main line. While holding our position and building rifle pits for our pickets, Daniel Densel of company E was mortally wounded. Our division formed the assaulting column of the 4th corps June 27th. Company E had one wounded.

I dislike to leave this heroic assault without a short description. The ground in our front was heavily timbered, de-

scending for 200 yards to a ravine, thence a thirty per cent rising grade for 300 yards to their line of works, consisting of heavy embankment with head logs, so mounted as to give space for firing underneath. A wide and deep ditch was in front of the works. A large share of the timber was felled with tops down the hill, all twigs and light limbs cut off, so that in advance up to their works haste or alignment was an impossibility. Through this in double column we struggled, a few of the men falling very near the ditch and others actually reaching their embankment, but they could not reach them in mass sufficient to drive the enemy. A new stand of colors, presented to the regiment by the ladies of Chillicothe, Ohio, was carried into this desperate charge. The color sergeant was killed and several of the color guards killed and wounded and the staff of the colors was shot in three places with fifty-seven bullet holes through the colors. Go see the flag in the State House, Columbus. The marks on the staff are still showing.

Sherman continued fortifying and lengthening his battle-line to the right (nearly south), until the morning of July 2d, when we found the Confederate lines were vacated. We followed close to their rear guard, about seven miles to "Smirny Camp Grounds," where we became quite strongly engaged, driving their rear and developing a strong line of works. Here we were held with very brisk skirmishing until July 5th, losing a few men from the regiment on the 4th. Again we moved briskly south, hoping to meet our enemy in the confusion of crossing the Chattahoochee River, but we failed. From the

bluffs on the north side of the river we first saw Atlanta, ten miles away, while here the non-veterans (those that did not re-enlist), were ordered to Chattanooga and mustered out, the veterans and recruits holding the company and regimental organization. On the 16th we crossed the river, advancing slowly that the army of the Tennessee and Ohio (McPherson and Schofield), who had a greater distance to move, might be nearer. On the 20th we crossed Peach Tree Creek and gained a ridge about half a mile south, when our division of the 4th and the 20th corps were to establish a line. The Confederate army, now commanded by General Hood, had concentrated in front of this position, intending to crush us while we were in the confusion of crossing the stream, and did make a most furious attack when but part of the line had gained position. Those not in line, being close, countercharged, driving the enemy and establishing a connected line. Hood repeated the assault, but was at every point repulsed. Thus less than half of the army of the Cumberland alone, without fortifications and hardly an equal show with the enemy, lacking a completed line at the opening, thoroughly repulsed the combined strength of Hood's army. On the 22nd we advanced in line to the front of the main fortifications around Atlanta. The army of the Tennessee, in the effort to close to our left, fought the battle of Atlanta, their commander, General McPherson, being among the slain. We skirmished very heavily and were under the direct fire of their artillery from the main line of fortifications in front of the city. This continued more or less until August 26th. The army of the Tennessee, now under the

command of General Howard, moved to the extreme right. The army of the Ohio, under General Schofield, a few days later did the same. This left our division the extreme left of Sherman's army. We readjusted our line of fortifications, making a refused flank with completely inclosed forts supplied with surplus ammunition, water and food. Sherman's flank movement by the right to the south of Atlanta commenced on August 25th by withdrawing our 4th corps to the rear of the 20th corps and moving it (the 20th) to and across the Chattahoochee River with all surplus trains and artillery, we the 4th corps continuing to move to the right, on the following day passed beyond the extreme right of Hood's army and on the 28th advanced to the Mount Gilead Church, skirmishing heavily and driving the enemy across the West Point railroad. On the 29th and 30th, continuing the movement, we gained possession of the Macon railroad, thus severing the last line leading from the city, and September 1st, until about 4 p. m., we were burning the ties and heating and twisting the rails, moving south as we did so, and by so doing were prevented from reaching Jonesboro in time to envelop the flank of Hardee's corps. We were rushed hastily into position and were driving their shattered flank when darkness and the entanglement of brush, ravines, etc., and the danger of coming into conflict with our troops closed the movement. In the morning we found the enemy had fled. During the night we heard the explosion of the magazines and trains of ammunition at Atlanta, over twenty miles away. We followed Hood south to Lovejoy Station, when we drove their skirmishers and outposts into

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

their main line of works. We remained in front of them until the 5th, when we withdrew and marched back to Atlanta, where we remained in camp until about the 20th. During our stay at this place official reports were made covering the losses of each organization during the Atlanta Campaign. I have not access at this writing to those reports as published in the war records. The 26th Ohio had killed and wounded, as officially reported, 117.\* Of this number company E lost but two, one mortally wounded, one wounded. Clark became captain of the company in December, 1862. He was on detached service, commanding a battalion of pioneers, and did not join the company and regiment until we veteranized in January, 1864. In May, 1864, he was placed in command of the brigade battalion of pioneers, consisting of twenty privates, two corporals, one sergeant and one commissioned officer from each regiment of the brigade or about 175 in all. Company E was made the detail from the 26th and we were exempt from picket or skirmish duty. We were required to each carry either a pick, shovel or ax in addition to that required of each soldier. Our place was with our regiment, but subject to call to any point, to build fortification rifle pits or to open or repair roads. We might justly compare our industry to that of the honey bee. During that campaign we stopped work only long enough to take part in the fighting and some of the time were using tools when the shell and minnie were adding impetus to our mental and muscular skill. About the close of the Atlanta campaign Captain Clark became the

---

\*Official report of General Wagner, our brigade commander.

commander of the regiment and was soon afterward promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and continued in command until mustered out with the regiment.

About September 25th Hood's flank movement around Atlanta had advanced so that Sherman divined his intentions and ordered our division north by rail to Chattanooga. The 26th Ohio was thrown in the lead (advance guard) on two passenger coaches, each man with loaded gun ready for immediate action. The division followed by freight trains in sections. On arriving at Chattanooga we were kept on trains much of the time and moving from place to place between Dalton and Bridgeport, many times nearly smothered with smoke as we rode on top of the cars through the tunnel under Missionary Ridge. After Hood moved west into Alabama we started to join the main army west of Rome, Ga., where orders met us by which we crossed Lookout and Sand Mountains to Stevason, Ala., where we were mustered for pay October 31, going from there by rail to Athens, Ala., thence marched to Pulaski, Tenn., thus placing ourselves between Hood, now at Florence, Ala., and Nashville, Tenn. We held this position until Hood advanced via Columbia. We moved October 21 to Lineville and to Columbia on the 23rd formed line of battle, each flank reaching Duck River, one above the other, below the town. This position we held, skirmishing lightly, until the night of the 27th when we crossed to the north bank. Early in the morning of the 29th, Thomas at Nashville ordered General Schofield (in direct command at Columbia) to fall back to Franklin. The trains, over eight



hundred wagons, were started on the Nashville pike. When the head of this train reached Spring Hill, eleven miles away, they were stopped by the enemy's cavalry. Our division, General Wagner commanding, hastened to the relief of the train, arriving about 1 p. m., Opdyke's brigade leading, and drove the enemy out of the town north. Bradley's brigade, the second in line of march, formed line facing east and advanced nearly a mile, our brigade, Colonel Lane commanding, forming the reserve. The 26th Ohio soon after was ordered to extend the skirmish line east of the pike farther south and take possession of and hold a dirt road coming into the pike over a mile south. At this place we were located near a cotton gin, on which an outlook was posted, who soon reported Confederate troops in sight. We built a rail barricade, each man got out of cartridge box and bit off ten cartridges and made all the arrangements we could for rapid firing. The gray lines could be seen by Sergeant Hall (the outlook) for a long distance and he kept posting us as to their movements. He held his post too long and was killed in the effort to reach us at the barricade. It was undulating farm land where we were located, with timber showing south of us and also in our rear three-fourths of a mile or one-fourth west of the pike. We could see the gray lines east of us, at some places half a mile away, as they were advancing, but owing to the roll of the land they passed out of our view nearly one-fourth of a mile in front or east of us and did not appear again until less than one hundred yards away. We opened fire and effectually stopped them in our front and temporarily to right and

left, but to our left, north of us, they soon pressed forward, passing directly between us and Spring Hill. Wagner, seeing our situation from his position, over a mile away, rushed a battery forward and opened fire, we getting the effect as well as our enemy between us and the guns. We held this position until all or nearly all had consumed their ten rounds, when Captain Clark gave the order to escape if possible. In doing this we obliqued to the southwest to escape a heavy fire now reaching us from the north and the quicker to get protection from the rolling ground. While the battery held them in check we crossed the pike and made a complete half circle to reach Spring Hill, which we did, losing 77 men from the regiment. Sergeant John F. Chambers of company E was among the slain. Schofield, with the army from Columbia, began to arrive about 11 p. m., and leaving our division, now confronting Hood's entire army, in position, moved north, driving the rebel cavalry from the pike, the wagon train following, just as it began to show light in the east, the last of the wagons crossed a bridge at the north edge of the town. Our division swung back in line of battle across the pike and became the rear guard as the train moved off rapidly and cleared the way. Lane's (our brigade) and Conrad's (formerly Harken's) swung into the pike, leaving Opdyke's the rear guard. This order was kept, holding the enemy in check until we reached the heights, about three miles south of Franklin. Here Opdyke moved to the inside of the works being built, Lane and Conrad moving back gradually from one position to another until nearly one-third of a mile



HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

in front of the hastily constructed fortifications. Here, through a blunder that General Schofield should not escape by charging it to others, as we were in plain sight and had been on extreme duty without cooked food of any kind for thirty-two hours, and every soldier in the line knowing we were in a false position, our two brigades of the division that had protected his rear saved the entire train, fought the battle of Spring Hill and stood guard during the night while the army and train moved on. To be left on the plains without works and both flanks exposed was a gross error. The 26th Ohio was the extreme right of this exposed line upon the plain. We saw the solid lines of Hood's army as it advanced. We held this position but a short time. Those to the left of us being more advanced, owing to the lay of the ground, than we, were struck and broken, we fell back to the main line. Company E was less than 200 yards to the right of the Carter House and the main line was not broken at this point. We fought with other troops that occupied the works when we reached them. Here the enemy was repulsed. A short distance to our left, near the Carter House, they had gained part of our line. The 26th, under orders from Captain Clark, moved or closed to the left to aid in repelling them from this place. Our lines, with the other troops in the works, formed in ranks four or five deep, the rear men loading and passing the guns to those in front, and the firing was constant until long after dark, when Hood ceased his efforts to make his lodgment permanent and firing gradually ceased. Vanhorn in his history states (Vol. 2, page 202): "The defensive fire was so rapid from 4 p.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

m. to nightfall that it was difficult to supply the troops with ammunition. One hundred wagon loads of artillery and infantry ammunition were used from the 4th corps train alone." Company E had one man wounded. In view of the fact that General J. D. Cox, in his writing on the battle, has left the impression that the two brigades doing outpost duty continued their retreat past the main line to the river, I feel that in justice to those brigades (and more especially to company E, 26th and company D, 65th Ohio, both Morrow County companies), I should say a few words more. I have never yet seen in any official report a single statement justifying his position. Cox on that day was in command of the 23rd corps. It was his line that was broken at the Carter House and it was Opdyke's brigade of our division that, without orders, started the countercharge which, with the assistance of Lane's comrades and part of the 23rd corps, reestablished the continuity of the line. Either of those three brigades, called Sheridan's old division,\* have more regiments listed among Fox's three hundred than has the entire corps commanded on that occasion by Cox. When we started from our first position, exposed on the plain, it became necessary for us to make speed and clear the field in front of our main line that our men in the works might open fire. In this hasty retreat it was but natural for the men to incline to the left or east toward the pike or road by which we had retreated from Columbia, and some of the ex-

\*Major General Sheridan was the first commander of the 2nd Division 4th A. C., and was followed in the order named by Generals Newton, Wagner and Elliott. It was commonly known in the army as "Sheridan's old Division."

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

treme left of our regiment reached the works near the Carter House and found them already vacated by our troops and occupied by the enemy, and two or three of company B were taken prisoners after reaching the main line. Of these, Sergeant David Bragg, now living in Columbus, Ohio, and one of the oldest railroad mail clerks now in the service, was one. From the recent call for volunteers and the draft, quite a large assignment of new troops had been made to some of the regiments in Lane's and Conrad's brigades. (Our regiment received none.) These new troops reached us while on the retreat from Pulaski but a few days before. They had never been drilled and it is probable that a large share of them may have continued their flight beyond the main line. Opdyke's, Lane's and Conrad's brigades (2nd division, 4th army corps) lost more men than the entire other four divisions of infantry and the cavalry corps that was present, and as a rule, if you follow the trail of blood, you are keeping close to the fighting line.

The veterans of that old division, whose well-tried courage shone forth in historic grandeur, it is not overpraise to say were practically panic-proof. Opdyke was in the direct line of retreat, and on the same reasons given by Cox and others for the break in the line at the Carter House, he (Opdyke) with no line of works to protect them would certainly have been "carried away" if the flight of Lane and Conrad had continued to the river. The men of the 26th were called from the lines and we crossed the river before midnight and continued our march, arriving at Nashville December 1st, near

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

noon, where we made coffee and lay down to rest for the first time since the morning of November 29th. In the evening company E was called to tear down some buildings in front of our established line and to build works during the night. We remained at this line until the battle of Nashville, December 15th and 16th. December 9th Captain Wm. Clark was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, First Lieutenant Phillips M. Ogan to Captain and Sergeant Walden Kelly to First Lieutenant. The first day of the battle, the 4th corps leaving a detail to hold the works, moved to the right, attacked the enemy, driving them from their fortified position. The 26th Ohio was left in our main line of works, deployed to a division front or nearly half a mile. Our instructions were to hold them. We were not engaged the first day. On the morning of the second day's battle, December 16th, before daylight, we moved to position in the front line of the brigade and at daylight moved toward the Brentwood Hills, driving the enemy's outposts and establishing our lines under easy Enfield rifle range of their fortified line. Under a heavy artillery and infantry fire we held position until about 3 p. m., when we were instructed to prepare ten rounds for rapid firing, at a given signal to commence and at a second signal, to be given as we exhausted the ninth round, we were to charge with loaded guns and capture the works on our front. These instructions were literally carried out, a heavy per cent of the enemy being captured in their works. We pursued rapidly until dusk. Early in the morning of the 17th we were in pursuit, the 4th corps in the lead on the direct line of Hood's re-

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

treat. Thus in midwinter, following as rapidly as possible, the bridges were all destroyed, and flooded streams delayed the pursuit, which was continued until January 1, 1865. The broken and disorganized army of Hood's crossed the Tennessee River at Florence, Ala. The latter part of the campaign was done by us on short rations; three days to last five were the orders. Our line of march was changed to Huntsville, Ala., where we arrived January 7, 1865, and remained enjoying a well-earned season of rest until March 15. Soon after arriving Captain Ogan rejoined his company and Lieutenant Kelly was temporarily placed in command of company F. This proved to be permanent. On February 28th he was commissioned captain and assigned to said company after having served three years and over eight months in company E, and, as it proved, after all our fighting was over. In March we (the 4th army corps), moved to East Tennessee by rail via Chattanooga and Knoxville to Bulls Gap, thence marched repairing and rebuilding the railroad northeast toward Richmond, Va. While at this work, near Greenville, Tenn., we received the news of Lee's surrender. That night was spent hilariously cheering and singing that old familiar piece, "Go Tell Aunt Rhoda the Old Gray Goose Is Dead." The following morning I doubt if there was enough ammunition in the cartridge boxes of the men in our division to have made a respectable skirmish. Soon afterward Johnston surrendered to Sherman and the 4th corps was ordered by rail to Nashville, where we expected to be mustered out. May 9th the corps passed in review before General Thomas and received his con-

gratulatory order on the 10th. About the 1st of June it became the talk of the camp that our corps would probably be sent to the Mexican frontier on account of the Maximilian government which foreign powers were trying to establish there. Strong protests were made by both officers and men, feeling that we had fulfilled the terms of our enlistment, "three years or during the war," but to no avail. June 16th the command started. Just before starting all who had less than ninety day's to serve were mustered out. The 97th Ohio infantry of our brigade came under this order. Fifty-six of their men, who had more than the specified time yet to serve, were transferred to the 26th, company E receiving her share of them. The command moved by rail to Johnsonville, Tenn., thence, by steamboats down the Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, La., by ocean steamers to the Matagorda Bay, landing at Indianola, since destroyed by a storm similar to the one a few years ago at Galveston. We marched about thirty-five miles and camped on the Plasadore, about July 20th. Here we remained. Nothing especially interesting or eventful worth relating took place—no drill, except dress parade. Guard and fatigue duty was reduced to the minimum until mustered out October 21. We started on the home trip the 24th. On account of storms and an unsafe vessel we ran into the harbor at Galveston and remained four days, were transferred to a safer vessel and arrived at New Orleans November 4th. We came up the Mississippi to Cairo on the steamer Ruth, the largest vessel then plying the river; by rail (freight cars) via Mattoon, Ill., Terra Haute and Indianapolis, Ind.



HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

From there we took passenger coaches to Columbus, Ohio. The enlisted men received their pay and discharges in the same barracks that we had built when the regiment organized in June, 1861. The commissioned officers were held one day later to turn over the official records and make final settlement, arriving at home near the middle of November, 1865.

Discrepancies appear in both the Rebellion Official Records and Roster of Ohio Soldiers. Some of them, when properly explained, show to the reader the honest intention of the compiler or author. I call attention to two cases:

First, General George D. Wagner, commanding 2nd brigade, 2nd division, 4th army corps. The 26th was in said brigade. In his official report covering the entire Atlanta campaign, May 3, to September 20, 1864, he reports ten officers killed and wounded in the 26th Ohio regiment.

The official report of Major Noris T. Peatman, commanding the regiment at the close of said campaign, reports one officer, Lieutenant Platt, killed, and five officers, viz.: Major Peatman, Captain Baldwin, Lieutenants Renick, Hoge and Foster wounded—six in all. During said campaign the company and regimental official records were left far in the rear and not seen until after the campaign closed. During this period temporary reports were made almost daily on just such scraps of paper as were available—leaves from memorandum books, etc. In the continual skirmish or battle many officers and men were temporarily disabled by wounds and in the daily reports would be included in the list of casualties. In the official report, made at close of the campaign, only those



HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

whose disabilities compelled a continued absence were reported.

Second, in the Roster of Ohio Soldiers: Company E 26th Ohio, is shown to have had two first lieutenants from December 9, 1864, to February 28, 1865—Kelly and Osler. The former was present (at date of commission) with the regiment and was mustered. Osler was wounded June 27, 1864, at Kenesaw and was still in the hospital, at or near the time Kelly was commissioned captain and assigned to company F. He (Osler) joined the regiment, was mustered and assigned to company E. He remained but a short time, his wound still in bad condition and continued so, and he was compelled to have his leg amputated twenty or twenty-five years later. He died in Columbus, Ohio, a few years ago. In 1890 I did considerable careful estimating as to losses and percentage of losses in the 26th Ohio and wrote Colonel William F. Fox the results of my study. I here insert a copy of his reply:

“Albany, N. Y., June 18, 1890.

“Capt. Walden Kelley, Osborn, Mo.:

“Dear Comrade—Your interesting letter of the 9th was read with pleasure and in the next edition of ‘Regimental Losses’ I will insert on page 32:

“ ‘Twenty-sixth Ohio, Wood’s division, number engaged 362, killed 52, percentage killed 14.’

“This percentage, however, already appears, although in a somewhat different form, on page 36, the loss being one of the severest in the war.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

"I was pleased with the perfect analysis you made of the enrollment of your regiment, for it indicates that among the readers of *Regimental Losses* there are those who catch the idea involved in the question of enrollment, and who understand the argument I was trying to make. Had I known that the enrollment of the Twenty-sixth was capable of such an extensive boiling down, I would have gone over the names myself, and, as a result, would have assigned it a page among the 'three hundred fighting regiments.' As it is, I will try to put it there in the next edition. I will also insert on page 13:

" 'Twenty-sixth Ohio, Newton's division, Fourth corps, 1,161 enrolled, 122 killed, 10.5 per cent.'

"A further study of the matter leads me to think that the Twenty-sixth must have lost 60 in killed and mortally wounded at Chickamauga but as this number includes some whose exact fate will never be known, I will have to leave the number, for the present, at 52, which is all that can be officially proved. If I remember rightly, however, this number includes two or three of the missing men in company E, whose names were mentioned in your letter.

"The Twenty-sixth Ohio was a fighting regiment, and its grand record at Chickamauga has given it a foremost place in the heroic annals of the war. The figures for its loss on that field tell better than any high flown rhetoric of the desperate stand made by that gallant little battalion. Will attempt no compliments here, for I have no words which can add anything to the mute record of the figures which I have already recorded in connection with its name.

HISTORY COMPANY E, TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

"Perhaps your old comrades of the Twenty-sixth may be interested to know how the other regiments of their division fared on that hard fought field. I enclose a memorandum of the casualties in General Wood's division, and have added the figures for the number which each regiment carried into the fight. These figures indicate that the hottest fire along the line was concentrated on the position held by the Twenty-sixth Ohio. If any other regiment faced a hotter fire, it must have been from behind breastworks or some equivalent protection.

"I think the losses in Wood's division were still larger than these percentages indicate, for the number present seems to have been taken from the morning report, and so includes the non-combatants, together with others who, although borne on the morning report as present for duty, never carried a musket. I see that the Eighth Indiana battery reported 134 present, but I never saw a battery take that many men into action. And the Eighth Indiana had been knocking around a good deal before it reached Chickamauga.

"Well, those were heavy losses, but they saved the day. I know there are many who call Chickamauga a Confederate victory, and the Johnnies fought hard enough to entitle them to one. But those two armies marched out for a prize. That prize was Chattanooga. 'You'uns' won it. and held it. 'They'uns' lost it.

"I hope your regimental reunion will be a pleasant one, and that your reunions may be well attended for many years to come. With kind regards for all old comrades of the Army of the Cumberland (for my regiment served in the Army of

HISTORY COMPANY E. TWENTY-SIXTH O. V. V. I.

the Cumberland part of the time), I remain

"Yours in F., C. and L.,

WILLIAM F. FOX."

The author makes no claim to being a writer or in any way qualified to prepare a historic sketch of this character for publication. He has made this attempt as a duty and a labor of love. The space allotted does not permit of an extended and complete article, such as the company's service would justify. Laboring daily, it is between days and with the limited records at his command, largely from memory, that it is produced. Having been present with the company in all its campaigns, battles and marches until its last battle was over, no one, living or dead, had better opportunities of knowing than he.

I have avoided individual praise or special mention. There is glory enough for all. Let it be the common inheritance of company E.

WALDEN KELLY.

Osborn, Missouri, September 1st, 1909.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 001 996 512 0





Hollinger  
pH 8.5  
Mill Run F3-1957

Hollinger  
pH 8.5  
Mill Run F3-1957